

Music development plan summary: Firwood School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-2026
Date this summary was published	30/09/2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2026
Name of the school music lead	Susan Hocking
Name of local music hub	Bolton Music Service

This is a summary of how our school delivers music education to all our pupils across three areas – curriculum music, co-curricular provision and musical experiences – and what changes we are planning in future years. This information is to help pupils and parents or carers understand what our school offers and who we work with to support our pupils' music education.

Part A: Curriculum music

This is about what we teach in lesson time, how much time is spent teaching music and any music qualifications or awards that pupils can achieve.

Music is taught as part of the enrichment curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4, ensuring regular access for all students and meeting the expectation of timetabled music throughout the academic year. The curriculum is designed to be inclusive, engaging, and responsive to the diverse needs of our learners, incorporating elements of rhythm, sound exploration, performance, and sensory integration. For students following the Thrive curriculum, music supports emotional regulation, communication, and engagement, making it an essential tool for sensory development and wellbeing.

In the sixth form, students study music as part of the nationally recognised Arts Award, providing a structured yet flexible framework for creative expression and personal achievement. In Key Stage 4, music forms part of the ASDAN Certificate of Personal Development, supporting students in building confidence, social interaction, and reflective thinking. Across all key stages, music plays a vital role in promoting personal development, improving behaviour and attitudes, and enhancing focus and motivation. The curriculum also introduces students to musical careers and creative industry pathways, forming a key element of Firwood School's CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) strategy.

Part B: Co-curricular music

This is about opportunities for pupils to sing and play music, outside of lesson time, including choirs, ensembles and bands, and how pupils can make progress in music beyond the core curriculum.

Firwood School offers a wide range of co-curricular music activities that are open to all students, regardless of pathway or key stage. A weekly choir is well attended and inclusive, with performances at events such as the annual SENDi Conference in Bolton. This choir also leads regular singing assemblies, which bring the whole school together in celebration and shared musical experiences. The school hosts a weekly music club every Thursday lunchtime, open to all, providing a creative outlet and an inclusive space for social interaction and musical exploration.

These co-curricular opportunities contribute significantly to students' social development, communication, and teamwork. They provide a space for students to develop their confidence, take creative risks, and express themselves in a safe and supported environment. For some students, co-curricular music also serves as an introduction to possible vocational interests and career pathways in the arts and performance sectors.

Part C: Musical experiences

This is about all the other musical events and opportunities that we organise, such as singing in assembly, concerts and shows, and trips to professional concerts.

Firwood School actively cultivates musical experiences that extend beyond the classroom. In partnership with Bolton Music Service, students participate in an annual music performance at the Victoria Halls, providing a high-profile platform for students to showcase their talents. Students also regularly experience live music during school events such as the Winter Wonderland, Christmas Fair, Prom and the school's annual Firfest festival. These experiences include both external performers and student-led contributions, fostering a strong culture of performance and celebration.

Music therapy is offered weekly as a bespoke intervention for students who benefit from therapeutic approaches, supporting emotional wellbeing, sensory regulation, and mental health. In the sixth form, students can select Desktop Drumming as part of their health and wellbeing options, providing a structured, rhythmic activity that supports focus, coordination, and expression. Firwood School supports individual students with strong interests or talents in music, ensuring they have the opportunities, guidance, and encouragement to develop these skills.

In the future

This is about what the school is planning for subsequent years.

Firwood School is committed to maintaining and growing its inclusive and aspirational music provision. Music will continue to be a powerful vehicle for developing students' personal development, self-regulation, and sense of achievement. It will remain central to our creative culture and thrive curriculum, offering every student the opportunity to express themselves, connect with others, and access meaningful musical experiences.

Further information

The Department for Education publishes a [guide for parents and young people](#) on how they can get involved in music in and out of school, and where they can go to for support beyond the school.

Your local [music hub](#) should also have a local plan for music education in place from September 2024 that should include useful information.